

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 SAM-01 OMB-01 SY-05 SCCT-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 FBO-02 EB-07 FAA-00

DOT-00 AID-05 IO-13 A-01 OPR-02 /115 W

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R 211212Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6275

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 11245

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT EG, LY

SUBJ: LIBYAN BOMBINGS AFFECT EGYPTIAN PUBLIC

1. SPATE OF RECENT BOMBINGS IN CAIRO, ALEXANDRIA AND ELSEWHERE, ALL OF WHICH BLAMED ON LIBYA, HAVE CAUSED GROWING SENSE OF APPREHENSION AND FEAR AMONG EGYPTIAN PUBLIC. GOE HAS WILLINGLY OR UNWILLINGLY FED THIS FEAR WITH PICTORIAL ACCOUNTS OF DAMAGE AND VICTIMS. IN ADDITION, PRESS IS DAILY PRINTING MINISTRY OF INTERIOR NOTICES WARNING CITIZENS TO BEWARE OF SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES, TO REPORT RENTAL OF APARTMENTS TO FOREIGNERS (I.E., LIBYANS), AND TO INFORM AUTHORITIES OF ANY SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY BY UNKNOWN PERSONS. GOE HAS ALSO TIGHTENED

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SECURITY ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS (INCLUDING SEARCH OF

PARCELS AND PURSES), PLACE GUARDS ON EACH CAR OF TRAINS, AND INCREASED NUMBER OF GUARDS AROUND OTHER POSSIBLE TARGETS, INCLUDING U.S. INSTALLATIONS (E.G., EMBASSY, NAMRU, AND CONSULATES) BEFORE RECEIVING REQUEST. CAIRO AIRPORT SECURITY IS UNPRECEDENTEDLY TIGHT WITH NO ACCESS BEING PERMITTED EXCEPT TO TICKET HOLDERS. ALL OF THESE MEASURES WELL KNOWN TO PUBLIC. SECURITY SERVICE OFFICERS ARE KNOWN TO BE WORKING AROUND THE CLOCK, AND TO FEEL CERTAIN FRUSTRATION OVER ENORMITY OF THEIR TASK.

2. NOT SURPRISINGLY, PUBLIC MOOD HAS NOURISHED SERIES OF RUMORS ABOUT ADDITIONAL BOMBS FOUND BEFORE THEY EXPLODED (SOME OF WHICH SECURITY OFFICERS HAVE CONFIRMED) AND OTHER ATTACKS (E.G., WOMAN REPORTEDLY KILLED BY SNIPER IN HELIOPOLIS OPEN AIR CINEMA AUG. 18), ALL OF WHICH BLAMED ON LIBYANS. RESULT HAS BEEN THINNING OUT OF CROWDS IN CAIRO AND ALEXANDRIA CINEMAS AND A RELUCTANCE ON PART OF MANY TO GO TO ANY PUBLIC PLACE. HOWEVER UNFAIRLY, SECURITY OFFICIALS ARE CRITICIZED FOR FAILING TO STOP BOMBINGS. SADAT HAS SAID IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT HE WILL PUT A STOP TO QADHAFI'S ACTIVITIES AND MOST EGYPTIANS ARE EAGERLY AWAITING SOME GOE ACTION.

3. COMMENT: MOST EGYPTIANS AND FOREIGN OBSERVERS SEEM TO ACCEPT GOE CHARGE THAT QADHAFI BEHIND BOMBINGS, BUT OTHERS WONDER IF INDIGENOUS GROUPS SUCH AS ECP OR MUSLIM BROTHERS MIGHT BE BEHIND THEM. IN OUR VIEW, NONE OF THE POTENTIAL DISSIDENT GROUPS HAVE YET REACHED LEVEL OF DISAFFECTION THAT WOULD LEAD THEM TO KILLING OTHER EGYPTIANS IN ORDER TO PROMOTE INSTABILITY. MUSLIM BROTHERS IN PARTICULAR ARE EXPERIENCING A FREEDOM OF ACTION THAT THEY HAVE NOT ENJOYED SINCE PRE-1952 AND ARE UNLIKELY TO RISK A NEW CRACKDOWN. AVERAGE EGYPTIAN, HOWEVER, IS PROBABLY MORE CONCERNED ABOUT RESTORATION OF FEELINGS OF SECURITY THAN SOURCE OF BOMBINGS AND GOE WILL BE UNDER MOUNTING PRESSURE TO PREVENT THEIR RECURRENCE.

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